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ENG 3110G-001: Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East

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English/Philosophy 3110G.001
 Dannie Otto/Michael Loudon
 Section 001 TR 1100-1215 (CH 2721)

Spring 2014

Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East

Course Description: This course introduces students to the cultural foundations of India, China and the Middle East through literary, philosophical and sacred texts that have helped shape and define these civilizations. In the first segment on India, we shall consider the Upanishads to discuss Brahmanism and the development of Hinduism, then continue with an introduction to the epic *Mahabharata* and follow with a close reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. From classical Hinduism, we shall consider the basic doctrines of Buddhism, with a particular emphasis on Zen practice and approaches to Buddhism. The second segment examines Chinese civilization through the study of Confucius and his ideals of self and humanity and through the study of Taoism as reflected in the works of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The final segment focuses on the civilization of the Middle East by first considering Arab culture and the dawn of Islam through substantial excerpts from *The Qur'an*. Next, we shall turn to Sufi spiritualism through short readings from Rumi.

Course Format: As instructors in a team-taught interdisciplinary course, we shall provide introductory contexts for our readings through lectures and responses that we hope will provoke your questions and comments so that discussion can become an integral aspect of our time in class. Exploring these traditions in reference to Western philosophical issues and literary themes whenever appropriate, we encourage you to relate your questions and perceptions to your own experiences and beliefs by focusing on differences and similarities. What are the implications for these systems of thought? Do these cultural ideas and traditions help illuminate current socio-political and cultural events?

Course Texts:

Reza Aslan, *No god but God*
 W. T. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*
 E. Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita*
 E. Easwaran, *The Upanishads* (1996)
 E. Easwaran, *The Dhammapada*
 Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Victor H. Mair, trans.
The Qur'an, Tarif Khalidi, trans.
 W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*
 Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, Coleman Barks, trans.

Prerequisite: All students must have completed ENG 1002G, 1092G or the equivalent.

Course Requirements and Grading: The course format will be informal lecture and exploratory discussion; course requirements will consist of three essay examinations (20% each, including the final) and two five-to-six page essays (15% each [see immediately below]) [90%] as well as participation (10%)—consisting of discussion, quizzes and written responses to reading assignments.

Please Note: In conjunction with Booth Library's programming series *Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys*, one of the two essays above may be completed by reading the book being discussed at the specific program (included in the course syllabus), participating in discussion at the event and submitting an essay that includes elements from both

the book (or film) and the discussion. Feel free to consult one of the instructors regarding the development of your thesis. The essay will be due when the next essay assignment is due, but you may submit it as soon after the event as you wish when you have finished it.

To encourage preparatory reading, regular short writing assignments on the assigned reading or short quizzes will be given. These will be several paragraphs in length and will address some aspect of the reading assignment, will be due (or given) at the beginning of class and will not be accepted on a make-up basis. Quizzes will generally consist of one or two paragraphs on a straightforward question based on the assigned reading. Both will be returned marked with a check to show acceptable performance or an X to indicate unacceptable performance. These assignments/quizzes will not be factored directly into the final grade percentage, except as an element of participation. They are, however, a *required* part of the course, and a student who does not complete them *will not have met the course requirements*. Students will be allowed three missed assignments or inadequate quizzes.

Please Note: In conjunction with Booth Library's programming series *Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys*, we will offer **extra credits** for up to two points (in addition to the 100% of course component grading) for each event that you attend, participate in and submit a one-to-two page response (roughly 400 words). These responses do not presume that you have read the book being discussed. You may pursue extra credit for up to five events on the *syllabus*. In short, you can earn an extra ten points in final course grading by attending five events and submitting five responses: doing so, for example, would raise a final course score of 71—a C—to one of 81—a B.

All course materials to be graded will be divided equally between the instructors, rotating sets for subsequent assignments until the end of the term. (Group 6 in the English Department requirements.)

Please note that adjustments to the *syllabus* will be ongoing, and, if students miss class for any reason, excused or unexcused, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructors for updates to the schedule or assignments.

Office: Dannie Otto: Coleman 2280; Phone: (217) 254-9876
TR 8:00-9:00 & 12:30-1:30; or, by appointment;
Email: dlotto@eiu.edu

Michael Loudon: Coleman 3361; Phone: 581-2428
T 10:00-11:00; W 2:00-4:00; R 3:30-4:30 or, by
appointment;
Email: mdloudon@eiu.edu

General Policies:

Grading Standards: We shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, we shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high B from a low one.

Attendance: We do take roll, and we evaluate attendance only indirectly in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless we ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see one of us.

Plagiarism: The English Department Policy

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If we discover an act of plagiarism, we shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible. (See *The Blair Handbook* (4th ed), pp. 505-518, for a further discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and how to integrate properly your material from sources.)

Academic Dishonesty:

Obviously, any act of cheating other than plagiarism will also carry an academic penalty, that to be determined by Judicial Affairs, depending upon the dishonest act and the circumstances.

Information for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

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Spring 2014

Syllabus—Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East

January

- T 14: Course Introduction and Organization
 R 16: **Hindu and Buddhist Thought**
 "Kena" and "Katha" Upanishads from Easwaran
 "The Mahabharata" (handout)

 T 21: *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. E. Easwaran: "Introduction"; chapters 1-2
 R 23: (continued); chapters 3-7

 T 28: (continued); chapters 8-12
 W 29: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
 Opening Program/Reception
 Wednesday, January 29, 7 p.m. Booth Library West Reading Room
 Keynote speaker, Dr. Brian Mann, Assistant Professor of History: *Islam and the Monotheistic Tradition*
 R 30: (continued); chapters 13-18

February

- T 4: W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*
 W 5: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
 Wednesday, Feb. 5, 6 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Book discussion, *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*,
 led by Dr. Brian Mann
 R 6: (continued)

 T 11: E. Easwaran, *The Dhammapada*
 W 12: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
 Wednesday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Film screening, *Prince Among Slaves*, led by Dr. Michael Loudon
 R 13: (continued)

 T 18: The Japanese expression of Buddhism: Zen
 "The Story of My Hut" (handout)
 W 19: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
 Wednesday, Feb. 19, 6 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Book discussion, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*, led by Dr. Brian Mann
 R 20: **Essay examination (#1) on Hinduism and Buddhism**

 T 25: **Chinese Thought**
 Confucius, from W. T. Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*:
 "The Great Learning" (pp. 84-94); "The Doctrine of the Mean" (pp. 95-114);
 "The Humanism of Confucius" [*The Analects*] (pp. 14-48)
 W 26: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
 Wednesday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Film screening, *Islamic Art: Mirror of the Invisible World*, led by Dr. Janet Marquardt
 R 27: (continued)

March

- T 4: Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, V. H. Mair, trans. **Essay #1 Due**

- W 5: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
Wednesday, March 5, 6 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Book discussion, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, led by Dr. Brian Mann, and Dr. Ahmed Abou-Zaid, Professor of Economics
- R 6: (continued)

Spring Break (March 10-14)

- T 18: (continued)
- W 20: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
Wednesday, March 19, 6 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Student research presentations, moderated by Dr. Brian Mann
- R 20: (continued)
- T 25: Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, V. H. Mair, trans.
- W 26: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
Wednesday, March 26, 6 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Book discussion, *The Art of Hajj*, led by Dr. Brian Mann
- R 27: **Essay examination (#2) on Confucianism and Taoism**

April

- T 1: Arabic and Islamic Thought
Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys
Tuesday, April 1, 7 p.m., Newman Center
 Interfaith panel, moderated by Daniel Otto, Instructor of Philosophy.
 Panelists: Rabbi Alan Cook, Mr. Roy Lanham, Professor Jyoti Panjwani, Professor Jaysinha Shinde and Professor Duangrudi Suksang
- R 3: Early Arabic poetry
- T 8: Reza Aslan, *No god but God* (Chapters TBD)
- W 9: **Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys**
Wednesday, April 9, 5:30 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Book discussion, *A Rumi Anthology*, led by Dr. Jaysinha Shinde, Assistant Professor of Business
- R 10: *The Qur'an*, Tarif Khalidi, trans. (Surahs [chapters] TBD)
- T 15: *The Qur'an*, Tarif Khalidi, trans.; orientation for field trip
Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys
Tuesday, April 15, 7 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library.
 Panel discussion, *Women in Veil*, moderated by Dr. Bonnie Irwin, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities. Panelists: Reham Hamdy Abou-Zaid, Huma Malik, Shannon Mavi
- R 17: **Field Trip to Central Illinois Mosque and to Japan House—tentative**
- T 22: Women in Islam; Violence in Islam
- R 24: Islam (continued)
- T 29: Sufism and Sufi poetry; from *The Essential Rumi*, Coleman Barks, trans.

May

- R 1: (continued); video *Rumi*; (**Essay #2 Due**)

Essay Examination (#3) on Islamic Thought: Tuesday, May 6, 2:45-4:45 pm

*****Please note:** We may—from time to time—alter slightly the above syllabus, so please be sure that you keep abreast of developments in the class.

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Spring 2014

(REVISED) Syllabus—Cultural Foundations II: India, China
and the Middle East

April

T 1: Arabic and Islamic Thought

Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys

Tuesday, April 1, 7 p.m., Newman Center

Interfaith panel, moderated by Daniel Otto, Instructor of
Philosophy. Panelists: Rabbi Alan Cook, Mr. Roy Lanham,
Professor Jyoti Panjwani, Professor Jaysinha Shinde and
Professor Duangrudi Suksang

R 3: Early Arabic poetry (handout)

T 8: Background and Origins of Islam

Aslan, *No god but God*, ch. 1 The Sanctuary in the Desert,
pp. 3 - 22

Qur'an - Tarif Khalidi, trans., read The Exordium, p. 9

W 9: Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys

Wednesday, April 9, 5:30 p.m., Witters Conference Room

4440, Booth Library. Book discussion, *A Rumi Anthology*, led
by Dr. Jaysinha Shinde, Assistant Professor of Business

R 10: - Early Islam: Mecca - Medina - Mecca

Aslan, *No god but God*, ch.2 The Keeper of the Keys, pp, 23 -
49

Aslan, *No god but God*, ch. 3 The City of the Prophet, pp. 50
- 74

T 15: Reading the Qur'an I

Look for the following themes in these passages: images of
God; portrayal of the human condition.

Sura 53 - The Star p. 371 The first 18 verses of this sura
are considered to be among the earliest of the revelations.

Sura 81- The Cessation p. 419 An apocalyptic vision of the
day of reckoning.

Sura 82- The Cataclysm p. 422 Another version of the
apocalypse.

Sura 83 - The Unjust p. 421 Each will receive their due.

Sura 86- The Nightly Visitant p. 423 Wisdom from the night sky.
 Sura 89- The Dawn p. 425 The peaceful soul.
 Sura 96- Clots of Blood p. 429 One of the very earliest revelations.
 Sura 98- The Proof p. 430 Response to skeptics.
 Sura 107- Alms p. 432 On the importance of generosity.
 Sura 109- The Unbelievers p. 433 On religious tolerance.
 Sura 110 - Help p. 434 God ever merciful.

Booth Library's Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys

Tuesday, April 15, 7 p.m., Witters Conference Room 4440, Booth Library. Panel discussion, *Women in Veil*, moderated by Dr. Bonnie Irwin, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities.
 Panelists: Reham Hamdy Abou-Zaid, Huma Malik, Shannon Mavi

R 17: The Qur'an (continued)

Look for the following themes in these passages:
 instructions on social relationships within the Muslim community; instructions on relationships with those outside the Muslim community.

Sura 2 - "The Cow" pp. 11 - 42
 Sura 4 - "Women" pp. 60 - 78
 Sura 5 - "The Table" pp. 79 - 91
 Sura 19 - "Mary" pp. 214 - 219
 Sura 23 - "The Believers" pp. 240 - 246

T 22: Women in Islam; Violence and jihad in Islam; orientation for field trip

R 24: Field Trip to Central Illinois Mosque and to Japan House

T 29: Sufism and Sufi poetry; from *The Essential Rumi*, Coleman Barks, trans. (selections on the handout)

May

R 1: (continued); video *Rumi*; (Essay #2 Due)

Essay Examination (#3) on Islamic Thought: Tuesday, May 6, 2:45-4:45 pm